

Spark gap

February 2000

Question pool release date?

A revised Amateur Radio question pool that reflects the April 15, 2000 restructuring rules could be out by early February. Chairman Ray Adams, W4CPA, of the National Conference of Volunteer Coordinators question Pool Committee says the QPC is in "band aid" mode right now and will try to get something usable into public domain for all of the new written pools by February 1 or very shortly thereafter."

Adams says the Technician class syllabus already has been drafted and approved. The various QPC members have been keeping in touch by telephone and e-mail since the FCC announced the restructuring rules December 30.

"We will go back over the newly configured pools, refining them and updating in a methodical manner with the order to be decided by the NCVEC when next in session." Adams said the revised question pools will follow the established format.

After April 15, 2000, the FCC will only issue Technician, General and Extra class licenses. Novice and Advanced licensees will retain current operating privileges and may renew indefinitely. Applicants desiring HF privileges will only have to pass a 5 WPM Morse Code test. Current Amateur Radio study materials remain valid at least until the new rules become effective in April.

The new licensing regime has four examination elements: Element 1, the 5 WPM Morse Code test; Element 2, a 35-question Technician test; Element 3, a 35-question General test; and Element 4 a 50-question Amateur Extra test.

Frequently asked questions on restructuring are available at <http://www.arrl.org/news/restructuring/faq.html/>.

A copy of the entire Report and Order (FCC 99-412) is available.

<http://www.arrl.org/news/restructuring/regulatory/-wt98-143ro.pdf> or at http://www.fcc.gov/Daily_Release/Daily_Buiseness/1999/db991230/fcc994-12.txt.

From ARRL letter

League to Press for Stronger Preemption Policy

The ARRL will ask the FCC to partially reconsider its dismissal of RM-8763, the League's 1996 petition that sought to strengthen and clarify PRB-1.

The League also agreed to fund a Florida Antenna case that has PRB-1 implications. PRB-1 spelled out by the FCC in 1985 and since incorporated into the laws of seven states calls on state and local governments to reasonably accommodate Amateur Radio and apply the least restrictive means to regulate amateur antennas and activity.

Arrl Executive Voce President David Summer, K1ZZ, said the thrust of the League's petition was to get the FCC to deal with "things that frustrate the intent of PRB-1 or the to run up the cost" for hams. Among the specifics, the League petitioned called for the FCC to say that any state or local antenna restrictions limiting ham radio antennas to heights below 70 feet would be presumed unreasonable unless the state or local authority could show its restrictions were necessary for health, safety or aesthetic reasons.

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In an order released November 19, the FCC dismissed RM-8763 in its entirety and indicated it was unwilling to go beyond what is already spelled out in PRB-1.

We continue to believe that the standards the Commission set, that is reasonable accommodation and minimum practicable regulation, have worked relatively well, the FCC said in turning down RM-8763. But the dismissal order did include some wording that could prove beneficial to amateurs.

In its denial, the FCC said it would not be prudent or appropriate to set a height standard for amateur antennas and supporting structures because of varying circumstances that may occur for different antenna configurations.

The League will ask the FCC to reconsider two important aspects of the original petition.

MEETING December 4 in Texas the ARRL Executive Committee voted to seek reconsideration of the FCC order regarding the application of PRB-1 to restrictive covenants and excessive costs that localities might levy or require in order to install an antenna structure.

In its dismissal, the FCC pointed out that PRB-1 excludes restrictive covenants in private contracts as outside the reach of our limited preemption. The Commission said however that it strangely encourages homeowners associations and private contracting parties to follow the principle of reasonable accommodation with respect to Amateur Radio.

In addressing zoning laws and application costs, the FCC dismissal order asserted that the PRB-1 principle of reasonable accommodation and minimum practicable regulation already provide sufficient guidance to communities. Local zoning ordinances should be written to not impinge on the needs of amateur operators to engage in amateur communications, the FCC said.

Hoping to take advantage of potentially favorable wording in the FCC dismissal order, the Executive

Committee agreed to have the League fund an appeal in a Florida Amateur Radio tower case. Leonard Persin, WB4HZQ, had appealed to Seminole County for a special exception to a 35 foot tower height limit to build an 80 foot tower on his nearly one acre lot. Initially granted his application was later denied after a neighbor appealed. Persin appealed in federal court, and the ARRL filed a friend of the court brief in the case. On November 2 a US District Court in Florida ruled for the County, saying it had properly balanced Mr. Persin's interests with the needs of the community.

In its November letter dismissing RM-8763, however, the FCC declared that, given the express language of PRB-1, it is clear that a balancing of interests approach is not appropriate.

The ARRL President Rod Stafford, W6ROD, has appointed a committee to study how the ARRL provides support for antenna case

From February 2000 QST.

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ARRL announces new DXCC awards

As it looks forward to the new millennium, the ARRL DXCC program has added a few new twists of its own, with something for the seasoned DXer as well as the DX neophyte inaugurated at the start of the new year were The DXCC Challenge, the DeSoto Cup, 20 Meter Single-band DXCC Award, and the DXCC 2000 millennium Award,. Here's the rundown.

The DXCC Challenge is open only to holders of 5 Band DXCC, individual standings in the DXCC Challenge are based on accumulated contact credits made on all eligible bands within the DXCC program using only current DXCC entities. This includes credits already received by DXCC for contacts within current DXCC list entities made after November 15 1945.

Challenge standings will be updated each year. The deadline to submit is september 30, 2000. Standings will be as numbers. Plaques are available for those who accumulate 1500 DXCC credits. Endorcmnt bars are available in increments of 500. This year, eligible bands are 160,80,40,20,10, and 6 meters.The band list will be increased each year until all bands (except 30 meters) are

Starting this year the DeSoto Cup will be awarded to the DXer who is at the top of the DXCC Challenge list on September 30 of each year. The cup named for Clinton B. DeSoto, W1CBD, who wrote the 1935 QST article that inspired the original DXCC program. A DXer may only be awarded one cup.

The 20 Meter Single-Sideband Award is the first of several new single band awards to be phased in over the next year or so. Contacts with current DXCC entities are eligible for credit, beginning with QSOs made on or after November 14 1945, on any mode.

DXCC reports returned after August 1 1999, show 20 meter contact credits. Those with a 5-band DXCC issued before April 1 1992, may submit up to 100 current 20 meter cards with no per-card charges applied.

Here's a DXCC award for everyone. To qualify, work 100 or more current DXCC entities during the calendar year (utc), any combination of bands or modes allowed. Here's the best part: You don't have to submit any QSL cards! Applicants must certify to the authenticity of log extracts submitted, however. The DXCC 2000 Millennium Award period began 0000 UTC on January 1,2000, and continues through 2359 UTC on December 31 2000. The DXCC 2000 Millennium Award is separate and apart from the traditional DXCC awards program. Qualifying for the award does not give credit for traditional DXCC awards, but DXCC rules still apply. The DXCC 2000 Millennium award certificate is available to ARRL members and nonmembers

From the ARRL letter.

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Clug Meeting Saturday February 19Th. 8:00am AT THE EOC

Bring a friend, neighbor or other interested party
Visit our Web Page at
www.midstatehams.org

December 2000

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

Membership

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is based in Franklin, In. Membership is open to all Radio Amateurs and other interested persons.

Club meetings are conducted the 3Rd. Saturday of each month in the training room of the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center at 1100 Hospital Road in Franklin, In.

Membership dues are \$18.00 per year for full membership. Other types of membership are available.

Amateur Radio Operators License testing is offered following the club meetings during the months of March through November.

The club maintains an open repeater on the 2-meter band at 146.835 MHz. All members holding an Amateur license have access to this repeater and full members have access to a phone patch on this repeater.

Membership dues and changes of address should be mailed to the club treasurer at the address listed below.

Newsletter

The Spark Gap is the monthly club newsletter. Articles and information that would be of interest to club members are welcome. Information may be submitted by E-mail or mailed to the club address listed below.

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At this months meeting we will dedicate Sandy's call to the club and MARC repeater. There will be a presentation of a plaque to Sandy's XYL and also one to the club.

The club wishes to offer it's condolences to Dave Wendt KA9OOH and family on the recent loss of his father.

The club also extends congratulations to Larry Turner, KB9PWN who passed General class theory , having previously passed his 13 WPM code test is now a General class Amateur. We also wish to congratulate Charles (Chuck) Moser on having passed his 5 WPM Morse Code test .

Last but not least we wish to extend this get well soon message to Vernon Gill, N9QBO who recently underwent a serious A-ortal surgery and is now home and doing well.

For the entire MARC membership Al WA9ZET.

To: All MARC Members:

Please comment on these questions. They do not necessarily require a yes or no answer. Give us your opinion. We want to do what the members want. These concern the Club's repeater and other club activities.

A - Tone access of the repeater

1. Should the repeater be PL Tone accessed full time?
2. Should the repeater be PL Tone accessed most of the time? When?
3. Should no PL Tone be used anytime?

Tone access:

The PL tone of 151.4 Hz has been selected for the repeater, and has been used. This tone stops random noise from bringing up the repeater. It also stops the repeater from responding to distant stations, such as during skip conditions. This summer will bring more skip.

Control Operators will be able to turn on and off the PL tone at any time, and normally the PL tone will be off during the Sunday night net.

The repeater will be programmed to change the courtesy tone when the repeater is in the PL Mode. The repeater will say at all times that the PL tone is 151.4 Hz. *I (N9MEW) recommend that the repeater require PL tone access at all times, except during emergencies, and nets.*

B - Station ID's

4. Should we use club members to make some of the station ID's?
5. What should these ID's say?

C - Auto patch

There will NOT be a cover tone on any phone patch. Also, you will no longer be able to extend the phone patch time. Each normal call is limited to 3 minutes. Emergency calls will have a 10 minute limit.

D - Voice Mailboxes

We will not have any Voice Mail boxes on the repeater.

E - Announcements

6. Should we keep all of the announcements, such as the emergency numbers, club meeting times, VE testing times, etc?
7. If some are to be eliminated, what would you eliminate?
8. Would you like to add an announcement? What?
9. Would you like to change any announcement? Which and how?

F - Sunday Night net

10. Do you like the time of the Sunday night net?
11. What would you like to see happen on the Net?
12. Would you like to be a back up Control operator for the Sunday Night net?

G - Club Activities

- 13 What activities would you like to see the club involved in?
- 14 Are there any activities that we are involved in now that you would like to see eliminated?

H - Meeting Programs

- 15 What programs / activities would you like to see for the monthly meetings?
- 16 Would you like to present a program? On what subject?

I - Other Changes

- 17 What other changes in the club would you like to see?
- 18 Are there any thing that we can do to help bring old members back and to attract new members?

J - YL Net

- 19 Would you participate in a YL Net?
- 20 What day and time would you like to have the net?
- 21 Would you like to be Net Control for the YL Net?

MARC is planning to start a YL Net soon.

K - Comments

- 22 Do you have any comments or suggestions?

You may submit this questionnaire anonymously. No names or calls will be published, if the name and or call is listed.

Please return you questionnaire by **March 1, 2000**. You may give this questionnaire to any club officer or to Steve, N9NZI, or to Charlie, N9MEW, or you may mail the comments to the club at: Questionnaire, c/o MARC, PO Box 836, Franklin, In 46131

Or e-mail them to Charlie, N9MEW at csears@bluemarble.net